



The Cherry Tree



Volume 3, Issue 3

Command Ombudsman Newsletter

March/April 2004

USS George Washington (CVN 73)

The Captain's Call

Captain M. J. Erdossy
Commanding Officer, USS George Washington (CVN 73)

Hello family and friends of USS George Washington! One quarter of the cruise is behind us, and we find ourselves half way around the world, operating in the Arabian Gulf. Our activities include daily support of our brothers, sisters and cousins stationed ashore in Iraq. To date, our air wing, CVW-7, has not fired a shot or dropped a bomb, but our presence overhead has provided comfort to the soldiers in that hostile land. In fact, sometimes they just ask us to fly over to remind the bad guys that we are there. The bad guys do know that we are above with a credible capability to do them harm. This knowledge of that power and precision we bring to the fight is influencing the enemy.

Meanwhile, on the home front, I know that many of you are involved with the support groups and the preparations for the various events leading up to our return. Remember that the support group meetings are more than just a social event. Sure, they are fun gatherings and an important source of information about the schedule and other support activities, but I think the real importance of attending the meetings is in the team of support you build when you go to them regularly. Just talking to someone who is experiencing the same things you are will help build your confidence. Sometimes you need a little more help and hopefully you can find it through someone in the group. Attacking the challenges of a long deployment is more manageable for a team than it is for an individual...don't go it alone! At the support group meeting you will also meet the GW Command Ombudsmen. Each is a volunteer who has the experience and training to connect you with the professional help we occasionally need during deployment. Getting to know the ombudsmen team at the support group meeting will make you more comfortable about calling them when you really need help. Since we are talking about it, I am always looking for another ombudsman. Are you interested in helping others? Are you interested in getting the training that would prepare you to help our families in a time of need? Think about it, and if you are interested let me know!

Meanwhile, we are making plans for our return too! We are working the details on the schedule for our return and reunion classes, car buying seminars, returning-to-loved-ones seminars and even driver's safety classes! Yes, we are trying to schedule a Tiger Cruise too! We are not sure that our schedule will support the Tiger Cruise, but are planning the event just in case the schedule works out!

Before you know it, we will be heading back home! We will be home in time for some summer vacation action. Get your ideas together on how you want to spend your time when we return. Talk to your Sailor before our return so you can know each other's expectations! It will be a good investment to talk about it now rather than wait until we get there. The schedule for next fall looks pretty good with a few short at-sea periods spread over the time between our return and the holidays!

Our Sailors are still in great spirits, doing our Nation's work. I am so proud of their performance, and so honored to be a part of

this awesome team! Remember that you are a vital part of that team too! Thank you for continuing to provide the support and encouragement that we thrive on when we are so far from home! Good on you!

Sincerely,

Captain Marty

CMC's Take

CMDCM(SW/AW/SCW) Scott Benning
Command Master Chief, USS George Washington (CVN 73)

Hello GW Families! It is another great day on the mighty GW! Can you believe that we are 25 percent of the way through the deployment? Many of you that have been home dealing with the kids are asking, is it over yet? O.K., try not to beat me up to bad. I assure you it will be over before you know it, and everyone including yourself will be extremely pleased that you completed this deployment with great success.

This newsletter and our website are great resources to use in helping you through this separation. I would like to tell you about an additional website resource that is available to you. It is called navyonesource.com. This is a one-stop shopping site of information. If you do not have a computer, you can still get the same information and assistance through an 800-phone number. The phone numbers are 800-540-4123 inside the U.S., 800-540-4123 from outside the U.S. or collect at 484-530-5914. This service does not replace the Fleet and Family Support Center or your ombudsman, but it will provide you valuable information about programs and services available to you as a Navy family. When you sign into the website above, the User ID is Sailor. It will take you through various questions to identify what type of family or service member you are to build the website to your needs. You can also sign up for various newsletters that will be e-mailed to your account.

Just a few facts that I thought I would share with you as we continue the deployment. We have had 85 Sailors qualify in their enlisted warfare qualification. There are many more in progress. There have been over 250 United Through Reading tapings since the beginning of the deployment. Are you getting a tape of your Sailor reading to your children? If not, ask them why. It is a great way to keep your kids in touch with the parent that they will not see for six months. The last fact is one that all of us would rather do without, but our Medical Department has done a great job ensuring our health by giving 9,821 shots to the crew. Ouch! That is a lot of shots.

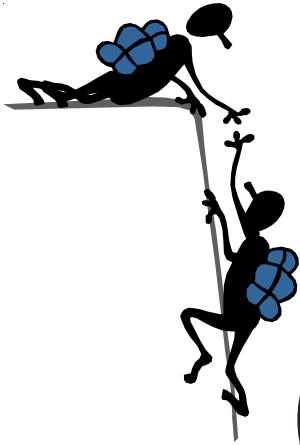
Well, March is almost behind us and I know you all are preparing for the halfway party in April. Have a great time and know that your Sailors are forward deployed out here, keeping you and our fellow Americans safe and sound by spreading the "Spirit of Freedom."

Sincerely,

CMDCM(SW/AW/SCW) Scott Benning

Thoughts from your Ombudsman/Cruise Directors for March 2004!!!

CONGRATULATIONS! If you are reading this, you have survived the first month of this deployment! Stand up and clap your hands and turn around in a circle. You have just given yourself a round of applause!



As we are all *painfully* aware, Murphy's Law is alive and in *full* force during a deployment. For those of you who are unfamiliar with Murphy, let me be the first to introduce you. Murphy's Law says, "Anything that can go wrong, will go wrong!" The following excerpts are from a variety of different people, all with spouses on GW. This makes for some great reading, especially when you think you've had a *really* bad day. Believe me, some of these people have had worse days than you! Happy reading!

"On my way to pick up my Sailor from the pier, I rear-ended someone on the Berkley Bridge right outside the tunnel. Everyone was fine, but my 2-year-old reminds me every day, 'Mommy you crashed that white truck, don't do that again!'"

—Cindy

"I was sick and had no voice due to laryngitis. My boyfriend had *finally* called from the ship, but he couldn't hear me and hung up thinking that he had the wrong number. He actually didn't call back again until the next day. Talk about wishing you could scream!"

—Tina

One evening my daughter pulls up in the driveway to be rudely greeted by a thief in the garage. He had decided that boxes of chocolate Valentine's candy looked like a tasty midnight snack. He was last seen running away from the area wearing a mask and carrying three pieces of chocolate, one in each paw and one in his mouth. Now there's a raccoon that was using all of his brains!

—Kari

DOH!



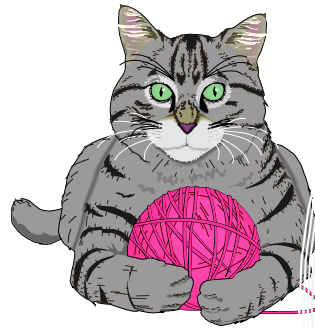
"I got a voicemail from my husband, and I *thought* I heard him say, 'I'll be home after work tomorrow.' The ship was not due in for three more weeks, so I was very confused. I starting to really wonder, *could it be a surprise?*

"So, all evening we are trying to figure out what is going on. Was he being flown off? Was the ship coming home early? I guess for a brief moment I started to get excited, not to mention very confused. Later on that night, I played it again, and this time I caught something that I hadn't heard before: 'Be home after work tomorrow. I love you.' What my husband actually meant was for me to be home so he can call and talk to me. Boy, did I feel foolish! So, that's my silly story about what happens when you just really miss your husband and how it pays to really pay attention when playing back a voicemail!"

“One time while we were on vacation we had a rodent move into our house. We discovered this fact by running the dishwasher and ending up with a two-inch flood on the floor because the hoses were chewed through. So we replaced the hoses, set traps and put out some tasty treats to catch the culprit. Two days later, we hear him running around in the heating ducts in the kitchen. The next morning, I went to turn on the dishwasher, and again he had chewed through yet another hose, which lead to another flood in the kitchen.

“Meanwhile, we have a bird fall down the chimney and it’s flapping around in the fireplace. To make a *long* story short, we ended up catching the rodent (it was bigger than a mouse and smaller than a squirrel), and it is no longer eating dishwasher hoses! We were actually able to catch the bird and set it free outside. I guess the things I’ve learned through this experience would be how to replace dishwasher hoses, how to catch a bird while it is flailing in the fireplace and how to dispose of an unwanted varmint. Oh, the things I thought I would *never* do.”

—Elizabeth



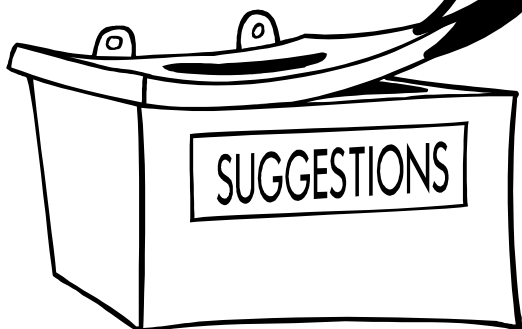
CLASSIC!

“Several deployments ago, my spouse was away and I was home alone in a new house in the middle of summer. We kept our back garage door open and the garage had a staircase that accessed the attic. Well, one night while sleeping, I hear rustling in my attic that sounded like footsteps and lots of movement. Well, I jumped up, ran outside with my cell phone and locked myself in my vehicle and called 911.

They came out and I was shaking and telling them that there was ‘a man in my attic and he is trying to get to me.’ The poor, brave policeman, with flashlight in hand, went into the garage with his gun drawn. Moments later, as I am literally under my dashboard, the cop appears with a cat in his arms which, I might add, was a *big* cat. He came to me and stated, ‘Ma’am, here is the man in your attic.’ All my neighbors’ lights came on and a few were on their porches watching. I, of course, was embarrassed and later on laughed about it. The policeman was a good sport and certainly will remember his big ‘cat catch’ in the middle of the night. All in the same thought, he probably still thinks I am wacky.”

“It is important that if you have to replace the windshield in your car, and you don’t really want to tell your husband that you did, you check to see if the visor hits the mirror when you lower it.”

—Joyce



"One of the funniest memories that I have is from the last deployment. I had just moved into our first house, and there I was, looking at the shower door and wondering how to get the mildew off the caulking. I decided to take the caulking off and recaulk. I got all the caulking out and was just about to take the door off. Just as I was lifting the door, the whole thing fell apart. The screws were so worn that they split in half. Now here I am with three children, just trying to fix caulking and now I am without a door. I decided to go to Lowes and buy another one. How hard is that? Well, I got a lovely door and got it home, thinking all I would have to do is take it out of the box and put in a couple of screws and recaulk. This shower door took me 36 hours to put together and recaulk. Now, two years later, it leaks and I have to redo the whole installation because I put the door on the wrong side. Instead of opening on the left, it should open on the right."

—Shelby

AND THE HANDS-DOWN WINNER FOR THE WORST WEEK OF ALL TIME GOES TO.....

"Bad car week. I was driving along when I got a flat tire (more like an explosion!). Two hours later, AAA put on the donut. I Picked up the kids from school and went to get a new tire. As it turned out, *all* of my tires were bald and needed replacing. Who Knew? \$300 later, I'm back on the road only to find myself with yet *another* flat tire. The new tires were under warranty so the shop replaced it with a smile. The next week I turned a corner too sharply and guess what? I did it *again*! Now the tire place was not so nice, but they replaced it anyway. However, that week the brakes went out on the same car, and the TV exploded from a power surge. Ahh, Murphy! Nothing ever happens when my husband is home, but the minute he leaves....If we didn't laugh we would probably cry, and sometimes we do!" —Michelle

GW celebrates African-American history and heritage

By JO3 Matthew Liddell

USS George Washington celebrated African-American legacies and heritage yesterday with an evening of study, entertainment and dining. SH2(SW/AW) Kimberly Richardson helped put the celebration together with the help of *GW*'s Heritage Committee. The committee meets to put together presentations which spotlight diverse cultures on board the ship and help Sailors learn more about their ancestry.

"It's important for people to learn about what happened in their culture's past," Richardson said. She aims to make history come alive for Sailors who attend her presentations. "When people come out, they're going to hear singing, biographies, and poetry reading. It should be very entertaining," she said.

Richardson stressed that she was grateful to the others in the Heritage Committee who worked with her to put the presentation together. She said every pre-



During a celebration of African-American History Month, Sailors filled the foc'sle with music from the past and present.

senter dedicated off time to work on their presentations for the crew.

AS2(AW/SW) Nakia Souders is in the choir that performed yesterday. She said it is important to highlight the accomplishments that others have made in the past. "Some people may not know just how much African-Americans have accomplished. There are a lot of inventors and other important people that are highlighted in the presentation."

SHSN Patrice Page presented a poem by noted African-American author Maya Angelou. "Her words are very inspiring," Page said of the poem she presented. "I just hope everyone found the ceremony as inspiring as I did."

The festivities didn't end with the presentation in the foc'sle. Afterward, Supply Department prepared a special meal in honor of the day.

CS1(AW/SW) Irene Jones helped put the meal together.

She said she was inspired by a lot of Southern dishes while choosing the menu. "I hope everyone can find something they like. We're going to have a lot of different styles of Cajun and southern food."

Jones added that she was grateful to her fellow CSs who helped her to put the meal together and hopes that the crew helps her show her gratitude. "If you like the meal, just make sure you tell the CSs they did a good job."

Richardson said that she just hoped the day of remembrance helps people get more in touch with the past. "It's important to give something back to the past by remembering it," she said.

Richardson added that she hopes Sailors learn some new information. "Just because you might be African-American doesn't mean you know everything about African-American history. I just hope everyone opened themselves up to learn something new."



Sailors from *USS Vella Gulf* (CG 72) disembark the RHIB boat on *GW*'s stern dock for a 48-hour cross-deck experience.

Unseen heroes keep GW safe

By JO2(SW) John Osborne

With 5,500 Sailors on board and a mass of 97,000 tons, it is easy to understand why *USS George Washington*, at the nexus of the *George Washington Strike Group*, garners the majority of media attention and gets the glory. But there are thousands of Sailors within the strike group who fill the role of unsung hero, and perhaps none more than the men and women on the guided-missile cruiser *USS Vella Gulf* (CG 72). Before I made my cross-deck to their platform earlier this week, I had no idea what their role in conjunction with ours was, nor did I realize how dependent we are upon this ship that is rarely seen and even less often praised. Standing by their Commanding Officer, Capt. Michael Davis on the bridge during *GW*'s night flight operations, the Navy's entire concept of teamwork and cooperation took on an entirely different meaning for me.

"Our main mission, especially when we're wearing the admiral's

see **UNSEEN** on Page 6

Air Defense Commander hat, is defense of the carrier from any kind of air threat,” Davis said. “You could say we are electronic police for the planes returning from their missions. We’re making sure the planes returning are the ones that are supposed to be coming back, and that no one who would do *George Washington* harm is sneaking in. We also make sure the pilots are aware of their no-fly zones so they don’t stray somewhere that could cause an international incident or the loss of American life if someone on the other side has a loose trigger finger.”

As the magnitude of this statement began to sink in, I began to hear the familiar sound of an approaching F/A-18 *Hornet*, and in another instant the aircraft cast its shadow over *Vella Gulf*’s bow from 800 feet above. Moments later the war plane could be seen heading toward *GW*’s flight deck, which is rarely more than 3000 yards directly in front of *Vella Gulf* during night flight ops.

Through a pair of binoculars I watched the *Hornet* land and visualized the dance playing out on the flight deck as *GW*’s competent crew went about the job of clearing the way for the next arrival. Meanwhile, the Sailors on *Vella Gulf* were doing a little dance of their own as *GW* began to turn and the cruiser took a hard roll to maintain its distance and position behind her. My new sea legs didn’t care much for it and I had to make a conscious effort to keep my footing, but those on the bridge seemed perfectly at ease, as did any other Sailor I encountered throughout the ship that night during the five-hour flight ops evolution.

“We get used to it,” said ET3 Chris Cabral. “We know that when *GW* is flying we’re going to rock and roll, but we’re here to do our part.”

Their part in this case is to act as *GW*’s plane guard. This means that they remain at least a mile and half directly behind *GW* during night flight ops and assist the pilots, especially on nights of low visibility, in lining up with the flight deck.

“Planes returning to *GW* use our lights to confirm that they are on course for a safe landing,” Davis said, pointing as an F-14 *Tomcat* demonstrated his words. “On a clear night it may not be as necessary, but even then if a pilot is having material problems or coming back with battle damage, it’s important that we give them every advantage we can. If that’s giving them a line-up light from



GW Sailors head to USS *Vella Gulf* (CG 72) for a look at the ship that protects them.

DMC(SW/AV) Franklin Ashe

3,000 yards away or being first on the scene in the event of a mishap, we need to be there.”

In an effort to prevent things from going wrong, *Vella Gulf* also assumes the role as key player in communications. *Vella Gulf* is responsible for running the Navy Tactical Data System for the entire strike group. That responsibility covers the Fifth Fleet we currently occupy, the Red Sea and even the Horn of Africa if we have ships there. The Link 4, 16 and 11 systems are directed from *Vella Gulf* and worked through *GW*, extending the communication range. “The Link system gives a maritime picture of what is going on in the air and surface of where we are operating. This assists all task force commanders in the Fifth Fleet with air and surface pictures, which is important when we’re keeping illegal activities from happening, such as surface ships who may be moving terrorists, or smuggling drugs, weapons and oil.”

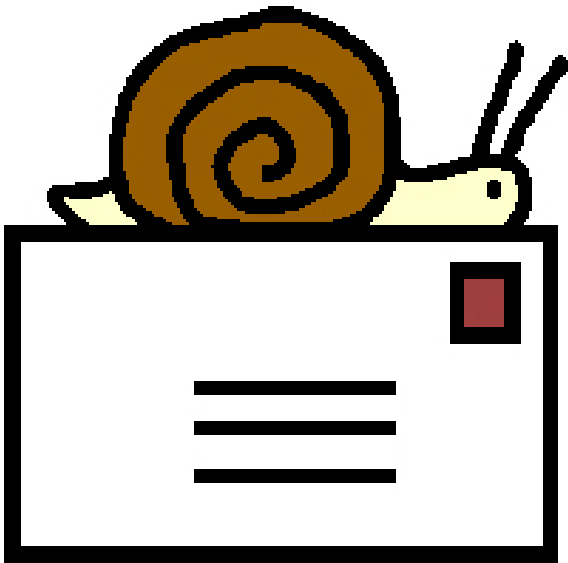
With their primary mission of defending the carrier calling for *Vella Gulf* to be “attached” to *GW* at all times, it should come as no surprise that they are also responsible for clearing the way and, if need be, sailing in between the carrier and a threat. When in the clearing mode, Davis likes to refer to his ship as a “snowplow.” He said the January transit across the Atlantic was an example of this maneuver. “In today’s environment we have to be in the position to kill any threat to the carrier,” Davis said. “When we’re in

the shotgun position, we make sure the threat has to get through us to get to the carrier. Typically, when we’re doing ‘operation snowplow’ we’re eight to 10 miles in front of the carrier so we can relay back to the carrier what is in her path.”

Commander of air defense, plane guard, director of communications and body guard to the carrier. It begs the question of how a crew of 400 has the time or manpower to accomplish it all. Having been on board there myself, I can sum it up with a few words: teamwork, cooperation, dedication, sacrifice, and a desire to see the mission completed safely and professionally. As Capt. Davis himself is quick to point out, there is no way he could do it by simply giving the orders.

“After spending three years on *GW* as the reactor officer, this is an entirely different line of work, but I enjoy managing and leading people and this crew is the best,” he said. “The Navy very smartly surrounds guys like me with experts and highly motivated Sailors who understand our mission. All I have to do is remind them to focus on protecting the carrier and they appreciate that responsibility.”

So when the next group of *Vella Gulf* cross-deckers step on board *GW*, be sure to thank them for all they do, and let them know that although they are not always seen, you know they are always there for us.



A few great tips for mailing those care packages:

- **Keep stamps in your purse or wallet to drop that quick card into the mailbox.**
- **Run pages of labels on your computer so that you don't have to write out the address of your Sailor all the time.**
- **Number all of your snail mail, as it *never* arrives in order. That way you will know if one is missing!**

The Legal Ease

Legal Department, *USS George Washington (CVN-73)*

The Apr. 15 deadline is quickly approaching. Here are a few tips to keep in mind when preparing your taxes. Remember that the VITA Tax Center is available on board.

TAX TIP: How long should you keep certain tax records? Records such as receipts, canceled checks, and other documents that prove an item of income or a deduction appearing on your return should be kept at least until the statute of limitations expires for that return. Usually this is three years from the date the return was due or filed, or two years from the date the tax was paid, whichever is later. There is no period of limitations when a return is false or fraudulent or when no return is filed. You should keep some records indefinitely, such as property records, since you may need them to prove the amount of gain or loss if the property is sold. For more details, refer to IRS Publication 552 at www.irs.gov under Forms & Pubs.

TAX TIP: Can you ask to make installment payments on the amount you owe? Yes. If you cannot pay the full amount due as shown on your return, you may ask to make monthly installment payments. However, you will be charged interest and you may be charged a late payment penalty unless you can show reasonable cause for not paying by Apr. 15, even if your request to pay in installments is granted. Before requesting an installment agreement, you should consider less costly alternatives such as a bank loan. To request an installment agreement, use [Form 9465](#), Installment Agreement Request. For more details on installment payments, refer to IRS Publication 594 at www.irs.gov under Forms & Pubs.

TAX TIP: Which parent can file as "head of household?" Filing "head of household" instead of "single" generally translates into a more favorable tax rate and a larger standard deduction. You can only file as head of household if you meet all of the following requirements: You are unmarried or considered unmarried on the last day of the year; you paid more than half the cost of keeping up a home for the year; the child lived with you in the home for more than half the year (except for temporary absences such as school). In certain circumstances, you do not need to claim the child as a dependent to qualify for head of household filing status, such as when the qualifying child is your unmarried child, grandchild, stepchild, or adopted child. Under certain circumstances, an estranged spouse with a child living with him or her may be considered "unmarried" and eligible to file as head of household, even if not divorced. The spouses must have lived apart for the last six months of the taxable year. If the spouse does not qualify for head of household filing status, the filing status for the year will either be married filing separately, or married filing jointly. If it is married filing separately, you will not qualify for the Earned Income Credit. For detailed information, refer to IRS Publication 501, Exemptions, Standard Deduction, and Filing Information, available at www.irs.gov under Forms & Pubs.

TAX TIP: Even if a child was born in December and you still have not received his social security number, a social security number is required for you to claim him as a dependent. You must enter each dependent's Individual Taxpayer Identification Number, either social security number or ITIN, on Form 1040/1040A Line 6c column 2. If you do not enter the correct ITIN, at the time the IRS processes your return, the IRS may disallow the exemption claimed for the dependent and reduce or disallow any other tax benefits (such as the earned income credit, or child tax credit) based on the dependent. If it is close to the filing date and you still have not received an ITIN or social security number you may want to consider filing a Form 4868, Application for Automatic Extension of Time to File U.S. Individual Income Tax Return, available at www.irs.gov under Forms & Pubs.

UPCOMING EVENTS FROM THE ENLISTED FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP

We have quite a few events coming up, so mark these dates on your calendars.



Homecoming, like this one from the 2002 deployment, is the highlight of the cruise for many Sailors and certainly for their friends and families.

March 18th - Homecoming Meeting, 7 p.m. at the Waterfront Chaplains Center.

March 28th - Spring Picnic at Breezy Point Park on the air station side of the Naval base. We ask that you bring a picnic for your family. Drinks, desserts and fun will be provided. We will have an Easter Egg Hunt, a visit from the Easter Bunny (so bring your cameras), games, crafts for the kids to make and last, but not least, prizes. Don't miss out on all the fun and excitement. You *must* RSVP to one of the ombudsmen by March 20th. This is so we can make sure we have enough of everything to go around.

April 1st - Deadline for applying for the George Washington Family Support Group and First Command Scholarships. We are going to give

two \$500 scholarships to a dependent of an enlisted person or officer currently serving on board GW. Yes, this includes spouses as well. First Command will offer one \$1000.00 scholarship to a graduating senior whose parent is currently on board GW. For more information, feel free to e-mail our ombudsman Tammy at GwEPres2003@aol.com.

April 4th - Dependent's Cruise on board *Spirit of Norfolk*. This is free for GW dependents and their families. Seating is limited to 350 people and is filled on a first come, first serve basis. This does mean you can bring your children. Boarding time is 12:30, cruise from 1:00 (sharp)-3 p.m. RSVP to one of our ombudsmen .

April 24th - Halfway Celebration. This is an adult celebration being held at the Breezy Point Officer's Club on the base. There will be a buffet dinner with desserts and door prizes to follow. Bring ticket with you to the celebration, it will be your entry for a door prize.

The main entertainment for the evening will be a video from the ship. Social hour starts at 6 p.m. A buffet dinner will begin at 7 p.m. A cash bar is available. Ticket prices are as follows: E-6 and Below \$5, E-7 and above \$10. Your family and friends are welcome to come with you. The cost of the tickets for them will be the same as what you pay. Tickets are on sale until April 20th (Dressy casual is the dress code, no jeans please). Contact Cindy Delano at 430-2902 or delanos@cox.net about tickets.

CVW-7 has history-making missile shoot

By JO1 Tracey Goff

Launching from *USS George Washington's* flight deck, aircraft from *Carrier Air Wing 7* fired 17 live missiles onto a range in over the Arabian Sea in two separate waves. The history-making missile exercise took place during a routine deployment for the *George Washington Strike Group*, de-deployed in support of operations *Iraqi Freedom* and *Enduring Freedom*.

The ordnance was delivered by *Fighter Squadrons 11* and *143* flying F-14B *Tomcats* and *Strike Fighter Squadrons 131* and *136* in F/A-18C *Hornets*. Clearing the way for the fighter jets were the E2-C *Hawkeye* pilots of *Airborne Early Warning Squadron 121* and *Sea Control Squadron 31* in the S-3B *Viking*. Each squadron had its own responsibility to ensure a safe and successful exercise.

A total of four F-14s and four F/A-18s left the ship in two separate waves on what may be one of the last live missile exercises for the F-14 *Tomcat*, which proved it could still deliver a lethal blow to enemy targets.

"The theory was to prove that even though the *Phoenix* has been in the inventory for more two decades they are still capable of projecting power and showing that they remain a very viable option in the air-to-air regime," said Lt.j.g. Matt Tallyn of VF-143 "Pukin' Dogs."

The *Hornets* provided the targets. "We dropped two of the three tactical air launch decoys, or TALDs," said Lt. Brian Larmon of VFA-131 "Wildcats." "It's a type of ordnance that glides. It simulates the profile of an aircraft we would be shooting at. It can be set up to turn or go straight. We can pick it up on radar and shoot it."

Once the *Hornets* dropped the TALDs, it was time for history to be made. The *Tomcats* and the *Hornets* fired their missiles: a total of



An F-14 *Tomcat* assigned to *Fighter Squadron 11* "Red Rippers" fires a *Phoenix* missile during a recent history-making live missile exercise. In all, 16 *Phoenix* missiles and one *Sparrow* missile were launched during the exercise.

16 *Phoenix* missiles from the *Tomcats* and one *Sparrow* from the *Hornets*.

"It's very rare that you'll see eight *Phoenix* missiles shot off at the same time," said Tallyn, a radar intercept officer in the second wave of aircraft. "They all worked perfectly, exactly as they were designed. We were excited and thrilled that we were able to go out there and prove that the system is fully functional and get eight picture-perfect missile shoots. That's as much as you can ask from a missile shoot."

VF-11 "Red Ripper" Lt. Garrett Shook agreed. "It was a once-in-a-career opportunity for me because we shot two at a time, which is pretty rare. In one hour, I doubled the number of missiles I've shot in my career."

Lt. j.g. Mike Manicchia of VFA-136 got the rush of shooting the *Sparrow*. "It's pretty out of the ordinary. We get to drop plenty of bombs at practice targets, but not fire missiles. That's something we never do. Most guys might get to shoot one missile on their first sea tour. So this is a big deal."

Working out the intricacies of a tactical exercise of this magnitude doesn't happen overnight. Lt. Mike Burks, the air-to-air weapons training officer from VF-11 who planned the missile exercise, said it was only through a culmination of efforts that this mission was a success.

"It was about a three-week process from start to finish," he said. "It required the coordination of assets from all the squadrons in the air wing, as well as reserving both the air space and the sea space for the missile exercise."

Once the range was clear, it was time to let the beasts off the ship, or in this case, the *Tomcats*, the *Hornets*, the *Sparrow* and the *Phoenix*. "The *Hawkeyes* and the *Vikings* were out there about three hours before the exercise began, clearing the space and establishing a good picture for all of us back here so we could start to build a game plan," said Burks.

"By the time the missile shoot was launched, we had a very good idea of what the sea space and air space looked like, so we didn't encounter problems with range foulers."

"We provide overall safety and a digital picture of what the battle space looks like," said VAW-121's Air Control Officer, Lt. Chris Barker. "We paint a picture of the area with our over-the-horizon radar. Because of the curvature of the earth, the ship's radar is limited by the horizon. We fly high so we can see over the horizon."

This technology is used to make sure the area is clear any civilian traffic, or range foulers, which could slow down or halt the exercise. "We ensured there were no commercial airliners or any ships that are non-military, such as cargo ships and oil tankers, in the area of the missile exercise," Barker said. "If there are, we then provide steering courses for the S-3s to relay to the ships."

The VS-31 "Topcats" then used their aircraft's unique ability to fly low and slow as a means of contacting ships straying into the reserved sea space.

"We are in charge of range clearance," said Lt.j.g. Brad Beall, a naval flight officer for

see **MISSILE SHOOT** on Page 11

Getting ready to move? A few tips for PCS success

Kelli Kirwan

www.Lifelines2000.com

Life in the Navy or Marine Corps would not be as challenging or exciting if the detailers and monitors didn't upset the apple cart on occasion by sending you and your family somewhere else. You have several choices of how to pick up your apples and get them transported safely across the country. Each move can bring different circumstances, so be familiar with the options when it is your turn for a permanent change of station.

Where Do You Begin?

Once you have orders in hand, visit your Transportation Management Office as soon as possible. Peak moving seasons, school rotations, or other specialty unit moves may affect your ability to schedule the dates you want. It helps to be as flexible as possible and have several alternate packing and shipping dates available. If the service member is unavailable, the spouse can arrange for the move, provided he or she has power of attorney.

Government Move

The government will move your household goods from one duty station to another. There is not a lot you need to do the day of the move. However, a HHG move is more involved than just changing your address. Government moves go smoother if you prepare properly before the packers arrive. Your local TMO counselor can give you a "do list" to help you get ready for the movers. A clean, de-cluttered environment will make packing more organized and unpacking easier at the next house.

Estimate the weight of your belongings before going to your TMO office. The pamphlet, "It's Your Move" has a list of entitlements (how much weight you're allowed to move or store) and instructions on how to estimate your weight. You will have to pay any excess weight charges. Garage sales and charities are good ways to reduce your weight before moving day.

There are some items the government won't

move. Your TMO counselor will provide you with a detailed list of what those are. You will need to make other arrangements to move those items or dispose of them.

Advantages to an HHG Move

You wake up by 6 a.m. on the morning your packers are to arrive, have breakfast, and watch as the packers arrive with boxes, paper, quilts, and tape. Rolls and rolls of tape will be used. Those special items you need crated or wrapped will be done by folks who have the proper packaging material and who have done



Service members have several choices of how to move themselves, their families and belongings safely across the country. Each move can bring different circumstances, so be familiar with the options when it is your turn for a permanent change of station.

it at least one time more than you have. When the packing is complete, the truck is loaded and someone else has to drive your belongings 2,000 miles, not you.

Disadvantages to an HHG Move

There are typically more packers than you have eyes. It is hard to really keep watch over how and where your things are packed. Once the truck leaves, you hold your breath that your entire shipment will arrive in one piece. If you need to file a damage claim, be prepared for a lengthy and frustrating process. Resist the desire to ditch the reimbursement process and just use packing tape to repair your china cabinet. At the same time don't throw the tape away; you will not receive replacement value for your damaged property, but a depreciated value.

HHG Move with a Partial

There may be times when you want Uncle Sam to move you, with the exception of certain items. This might include items you want to ensure will get there undamaged, such as family heirlooms, pictures, and unique or irreplaceable items. The combined weight of

your partial move and the government move cannot exceed your weight allowance.

DITY Move

The DITY or personally procured move is when you move yourself from one duty station to another and the government reimburses you for 95 percent of what it would have cost them to move you. Many families choose to do a DITY move, hoping to come out ahead financially. Your TMO office must approve the DITY move. Any cost incurred by you above what the government allows is not reimbursable.

Before deciding to do a DITY, consider the size of your household and whether it's really worth it for you. A family with small children may want to forgo the possible financial gain of a DITY for the ease of an HHG move by Uncle Sam, especially if the service member will be deploying, will have little time upon arrival at the new duty station, or is not available at all during the move. On the other hand, a family with older children may want to work together, move themselves, and make a family purchase with the leftover money.

Scheduling a move during peak turnover time can be difficult. A DITY move avoids the hair-pulling

frustration of readjusting your schedule to meet the availability of the movers. You don't have to wait or watch the packers wrapping your wedding china. If you estimate your weight as close as possible, pack well, and travel frugally, you can come out ahead financially. Your property is in your control from start to finish. You know where and how everything is packed. Everything arrives with you, so there's no waiting for your stuff while you sleep on the floor or in costly hotels.

You pack, you load, and you drive. Then you unload and unpack, and if anything is broken, it's your fault. Any cost over what the government allows will not be reimbursed. Failure to weigh properly and file the proper documents could also cost you money.

However you decide to transfer, keep in mind that many other families have moved their apple carts before you. They may have had a bruised apple or two, but they survived, and so will you.

the “Topcats.” “We call them on a maritime common frequency to let them know they are in a military live fire exercise. We ask them to alter their course and get them out of danger.”

But the aviators are quick to mention they couldn’t do it without the help of other ship and squadron personnel. The squadron’s ordnance personnel got a unique opportunity to use the skills they’ve trained so hard to hone.

“They get to load live ordnance that they don’t usually get to see,” said Manicchia.

Tallyn said, “There are always a lot of people that go and really make it work. We tell them this is what you do all the hard work for; this is why it’s so important to keep doing it. We’re just the ones who pull the trigger.”

Once all the aircraft returned to the ship, the reality of the accomplishment set in. “You really only get one opportunity to do this,” said Burks.

“Making sure all the players know their role is the number one key to a good missile exercise. It’s a matter of briefing everybody and making sure that all the players know their responsibilities and also all the back-up plans so if we need to move to a back-up plan, it’s smooth and efficient, and people aren’t having to ask a lot of questions.”

Shook backed Burks up. “For a missile exercise, it went real smooth. The coordination, the planning and the cooperation between squadrons all went smooth enough to get the missiles off on the first try.

“When we do a missile exercise from the beach, we’ll probably fly the missiles without shooting them at least once. We’ll practice once, then go out and shoot it. This time, we’d never flown the missiles before. We’d never practiced the scenario. We just briefed it, did it, and it was real successful.”



Tiger Woods and Mark O'Meara visit GW, CVW 7 Sailors

By JOC(IUSS) Henry Rice

Golf superstars Tiger Woods and Mark O'Meara took time in between holes on March 3 to visit the Sailors of *USS George Washington* and *Carrier Air Wing 7*, who are on station in the Arabian Gulf in support of *Operation Iraqi Freedom*.

During the 90 minutes they were on board the ship, Woods and O'Meara, who are in the region playing in the Dubai Desert Classic this week, were given an abbreviated ship's tour. They had the opportunity to view flight operations, and then were given an up-close and personal tour of an F/A-18 *Hornet* from *Strike Fighter Squadron 131* "Wildcats" and an F-14 *Tomcat* from *Fighter Squadron 11* "Red Ripers." But viewing high-tech military software was not the main reason for the visit.

"I wanted to come out here because I was raised in the military with my father being in the Army, and I understand the sacrifices he made for our country. I also understand all the sacrifices you are making, and I want to honor that," said Woods. "I want to do whatever I can to make you realize how thankful we are for all the jobs you are doing for us."

GW and CAG 7 are currently providing stability to the region. That stability, and the presence of the U.S. military around the world, is something O'Meara and his fellow members on the PGA Tour are very thankful for.

"We travel around a lot playing golf, but we can only do that because of what you all are doing for us," O'Meara told the crew. "We don't take that for granted. We know the sacrifices you all are making out here and we really appreciate it. Tiger and I send our best from all the golfers on the tour, and we thank every one of you."

After talking to the crew, Woods and O'Meara hit a few drives out of Hangar Bay 2's door, and Sailors cheered as balls disappeared into the open sea. Woods and O'Meara also signed numerous autographs for the anxious crowd before and after the golf demonstration, and as they were being escorted toward their outbrief.

Although the golfers were able to visit the ship and give their appreciation to the crew, Sailors were just as appreciative to have the professional athletes come and see them while they are so far from home. "This visit was a real special treat for me," said NC1(AW/SW) Ernest Rash of *Fighter Squadron 143* "Pukin' Dogs". "I have been a Tiger Woods fan since he was playing in college. For him to take the time and visit us is awesome. I even got an autograph for my son."

After the autograph signing, hand shaking and picture taking were complete, Woods and O'Meara met in the commanding officer's in-port cabin with Rear Adm. Denby Starling, commander, *George Washington Strike Group*, and Capt. Martin Erdossy, commanding officer, *USS George Washington*. Woods donated three Nike drivers and O'Meara gave three Titleist putters to be auctioned off to the crew. The proceeds will be given to the USS *George Washington* Navy/Marine Corps Relief Society fund drive and the Morale, Welfare and Recreation fund.



Tiger Woods and Mark O'Meara expressed their gratitude to Sailors on board *USS George Washington* for the job they do and the sacrifices they make in the service of their country. The two PGA stars were in the region to participate in the Dubai Desert Classic, which O'Meara won.



Tiger Woods took his game to the non-skid and drove some golf balls into the sea from Hangar Bay 2.

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20,000 pounds of mail arriving!



PHAN Jessica Davis

USS George Washington's postal clerks sort through over 20,000 pounds of mail that arrived in Hangar Bay 2 on February 28. The news and care packages from friends and loved ones that arrived that day are essential to Sailors' morale when they are so far from home. When sending a package, please remember to allow seven to 10 days for delivery.